Surára
Pakidái

884 /67 cont./
86 poisonous snake of South America, which is over three meters
[302] long. The painting is supposed to help to banish the dangers that
[825] emanate from this and other poisonous snakes. As daily nourish-
[262] ment the two candidates may take only a ripe banana and half a
liter of water. After two months they are very thin and appear to
[276] be nothing but skin and bones. In order to suppress their feeling
of hunger and thirst, they constantly have the roll of tobacco
mixed with water and ashes between their lower or upper lip and
[782] teeth (see p.190). Moreover, they must blow large pinches of
[276] the snuff-powder into each other's noses several times a day in
order to make contact with the gigantic animal and plant spirits --
hekurá. Thus, they pass their training period in a regular trance-
state.

884 It is worth noting that the initiation rites of the male members
756 of the tribe take place comparatively late, and that in this way
776 all the men are gradually trained as medicine-man helpers.
Through this, the Surára chief Hewemão explained to me, they
are able to protect themselves and their families against sickness
and accidents in an emergency. If, for example, a man is
threatened along the way by a poisonous snake or a jaguar, he is
now in a position to banish the danger by calling upon the tutelary
spirits. He must never fail to thank the hekurá after a successful
hunting expedition or a good harvest, however, for otherwise he
755 would incur their anger. Even when his wife, one of his children,
[753] or a relative falls ill, he himself must first try, by means of song
and dance in which he addresses the hekurá, to hurl the sickness
back to the hostile tribe from which it was sent. Only if his efforts
remain unsuccessful may he appeal for the aid of the chief, who
is always willing and, with the help of 8-9 assistants, carries out a
great rekurá (cure). Thus, during the day /68/ or at night among
the Surára and Pakidái one frequently sees one man, or often even
several men, praying or attempting to cure a member of the
[276] family. Before that, however, they must take snuff-powder because
contact with the hekurá can be made only in a state of intoxica-
[533] tion. The songs are somewhat monotonous and are combined with
animal sounds, animal movements, such as the beating of wings,
hopping, etc.

/71 cont./

765 Shortly before sundown a bright, blazing fire was kindled with the help of the fire-drill, and the funeral pyre was set afire 765 with it. Then the men blew the snuff into each other's noses, 787 and after a few minutes they were in a state of intoxication, dur- 276 ing which they danced, singing and screaming, around the flames that leaped up over the dead man. This was the appeal to the hekurá who are supposed to help the soul of the dead on its journey [782] to the moon (see pp.199/201). The chief uttered his prayers of supplication in a loud voice, and all the other men joined in the chorus. Meanwhile the men kept blowing snuff into each other's noses, so that their ecstasy constantly increased and finally reached an unimaginable climax when the fire took possession of the skeleton. It no longer seemed to be human beings who, howling, stamping, and gesticulating, now stormed around the pyre. They seemed to have taken leave of their senses, and, as a result of the snuff-intoxication, they probably actually were in another world. To me, the sight was like a nightmare and made me think [794] of paintings by Hieronymus Bosch. The wandering of the soul of [795] the dead existing in the bones, accompanied by the tree-soul, had begun, and the hekurá paved the way for them. Meanwhile, night had fallen, and the moon, which I suddenly noticed in the sky in its full size between the crowns of the trees, seemed to be waiting for its new inhabitant. In spite of the heat, which was increased [123] by the fire of the funeral pyre, cold shudders ran down my spine, and an indescribable feeling of terror clutched at my heart. Though I had not taken any snuff-powder at this ceremony, I, too, was in a veritable drunken fever. Never before, neither in church nor in a theater, had I experienced a scene as grandiose as the one here in the nocturnal forest of Amazonia.

This death ceremony continued until dawn. After midnight, however, only a few men, whose duty it was at the same time to keep the funeral pyre burning, were still dancing and singing. The other warriors lay exhausted on the ground and slept. Occasionally one of the dancers was nudged. He got up immediately, had snuff blown into his nose, and danced around the pyre, singing, while another lay down to sleep. Finally, only two men were still

/71 cont./

765 dancing and singing. About an hour before sunrise, however, all
787 the sleepers were awakened; they again took snuff immediately,
276 and once more there began a wild dance with singing until day-
[821] break. The death ceremony must be kept secret from the sun (it
[715] is likewise regarded as a male creature), the worst enemy of the moon, because otherwise it would hinder the soul's wandering. Loudly sustained, shrill, joyous cries formed the conclusion and made it manifest that the soul of the deceased had found entry
765 into the moon. Then all the warriors, sobbing loudly, formed a circle around the burned-down funeral pyre, while the /72/ brother and other relatives gathered up the charred remains of the bones from the ashes. After these had been pounded in gourd vessels by means of small stone mortars, the bone ashes were emptied into two bowls made out of the jamaru fruit, which the brother of the deceased wrapped with palm leaves and a liana binding. Thereupon he handed them to the chief, who lifted up each one in the direction of the moon and, singing, blessed it, while the men standing about uttered shrill cries. With this the end of the ceremony was reached, and the exhausted warriors could again return to their maloka in order to recover in their hammocks from
[766] the strenuous night. The brother of the deceased tied the two jamaru bowls containing the bone ashes to the rafters of the roof behind his hearth, in order to keep them for the big annual festival in memory of the dead, at which the bone ashes of their dead, mixed with banana soup, are drunk by the men (see pp.231 ff.). From now on there was no more wailing and weeping in the maloka; daily life had resumed its normal course.

776 After the death of women and of children too, as soon as they have completed the third year of life, the death ceremonies are
[822] conducted in exactly the same way. For a deceased chief, on the other hand, there is dancing around the funeral pyre for three nights, for, of course, his entrance into the moon must be particularly solemn.

/88 cont./

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434. (cont.)
servant Mateus and I were thereafter dependent on the cultivated tobacco of the Indians, which, however, was so strong that we simply could not enjoy it. Mateus, however, had the happy idea of washing the tobacco several times and then he let it dry in the sun. Since we had plenty of cigarette paper with us, we were not obliged to give up our customary enjoyment of cigarettes. We could never have become accustomed to sucking out the tobacco, for every attempt resulted in retching.

276 The narcotic snuff powder, similar to yopo or paricá, is made up of various ingredients, of which I was able to identify, besides the roasted and pulverized paricá seed (Piptadenia peregrina Benth.), the ashes of the burned bark of a wild species of mimosa (Mimosa acacioides?) -- hekurášihenâ -- (435), as

[192]
[776]
[787]

435. This, it should be noted, contains the word with which the gigantic animal and plant spirits are called -- hekurá -- with which the men are able to make contact only by means of the snuff powder.

well as a cultivated pepper plant /89/ (Piperacea sp.) -- maxarahâ -- (436) (437).

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436. Zerries found the same combination among the Waiká, and even the names for the pepper plant are almost identical; the Waiká call it "masho hara." The bark of the mimosa, in which Zerries suspects there is an alkaloid, is, however, used only in the dried or roasted state (Zerries, 1956b, p. 154).

[126]

437. Herr Prof. Dr. Klaus Soehring of the

Surára
Pakidái
Waica

/92 cont./

and children, bear names of plants or animals (see pp. 138/139). This results in a symbiosis which at the same time furnishes proof of the alter-ego motif to be found here. If a person who has passed the third year of life dies, an animal or plant of the species whose name he bore must likewise be killed or its death be brought about. This is done so that, for the long journey to the moon, the soul of the deceased has a companion who leads the way and facilitates for it entrance into the paradisiac realm of the dead (see also p. 149).

/93/ If the chiefs, who, of course, are at the same time medicine men, or other male members of the tribe wish to make contact with the nature spirits, either in connection with curing the sick, before or after hunting expeditions, on the occasion of prayers of thanksgiving for a successful harvest, etc., they have another man blow narcotic powder into the nose with a bamboo tube and immediately afterwards fall into a state of intoxication in which they feel themselves to be giants among giants (see p. 193). Thus, it is understandable that in a snuff-powder intoxication they identify themselves with the hekurá and use a very similar sounding word -- rekurá -- for any magical performance.

If one compares the beliefs of the Surára and Pakidái with those of the related Waiká /Waica/, who were studied by Otto Zerries, Meinhard Schuster, and the American Missionary James Paul Barker (448) (449a) (449b), one finds that they are largely

448. Zerries, 1958a.

449a. Zerries, 1958b.

449b. Barker, 1953.

in accord in their basic features.

All the tribes mentioned believe in a Supreme Being, Poré or "Omawa," respectively, and ascribe to it the creation of the earth and all living creatures. To be sure, there are certain differences, which may, however, be traced back to external influences. Thus, Poré is brought into relationship with the moon --

/480 cont./

755 time their croonings and threats directed at the harmful spirit. From time to time they pick up some object which they take with them. Sometimes they finish by inspecting the whole circle of houses, but more frequently the one who heads the "hunt for the spirit" points with his finger at some object, which one of them picks up, the whole group suddenly rushing toward the hut where the sick person is.

755 /481/ Frequently one of those who participate in the "hunt
787 for the spirit" falls into a paroxysm, which he generally ends with a tremendous leap into the air, to fall unconscious on the ground. The women immediately bring water and after a while manage to revive him.

On one occasion a man who was crooning before a sick child suddenly lost his mind and began to say strange things. It seemed as though a strange power had seized him, to the point where it was necessary for six men to hold him so that the women could throw water on him to bring him out of his spell.

754 They also believe that a man can "send" a sickness or misfortune to another. Frequently the majority of the croonings which they intone in the evenings when they have taken "yopo" are designed to "send" calamities to their enemies.

754 On a certain occasion, when all were camped about two
752 hours of travel from the settlement, a girl was bitten by a poison-
123 ous snake. Her father came to get me to treat her. He told me that he was very angry, and he asked me if it were I who had sent the snake. He was very pleased when I assured him that I had not sent it.

754 They believe that a person can cause an enemy great harm, sickness, and even death, by gathering up "the track" of the enemy and rubbing it between the palms of the hands. For this reason the Guaika /Waica/ do not like to walk in front of somebody who is not in all certainty his friend, especially over soft earth.

The Guaika prepare certain powders which, when they are thrown in the air or blown in the direction of an enemy, can cause him annoyances or harm, according to what they believe, although the said enemy might be many miles away in another settlement.

276 [412] powder as it dries, the flat side of a stone axe[6] serving as the grinding pestle. The dried, green powder, no more than several tablespoons full, is then swept onto a leaf with a stiff feather. The men then gather around the leaf containing the drug, usually in the late afternoon, and take it by blowing the powder into each other's nostrils (see Fig. 2-3). A small quantity of the powder is introduced into the end of a hollow cane tube some 3 feet long. The tube is then flicked with the forefinger to scatter the powder along its length. One end of the tube is put into the nostril of the man taking the drug, and his helper then blows a strong blast of air through the other end, emitting his breath in such a fashion that he climaxes the delivery with a hard burst of air. Both the recipient and the blower squat on their haunches to do this. The man who had the drug blown into his nostrils grimaces, groans, chokes, coughs, holds his head from the pain of the air blast, and duck-waddles off to some leaning post. He usually receives two doses of the drug, one in each nostril. The recipient usually vomits, gets watery eyes, and develops a runny nose. Much of the drug comes back out in the nasal mucus that begins to run freely after the drug has been administered. Within minutes after the drug has been blown into a man's nose, he begins having difficulties focusing his eyes and starts to act intoxicated. The drug allegedly produces colored visions, especially around the periphery •[187] of the visual field, and permits the user to enter into contact with his particular *bekuru*, miniature demons that dwell under rocks and on mountains. The man begins to chant to the *bekuru* when the drug takes effect, inviting them to come and live in his chest.

245 276 The Yąnomamö also cultivate a tree, *biisima*, that produces hallucinogenic seeds. These are prepared in exactly the same manner as the noncultivated drug.

322 396 TROUGHS AND CANOES The Yąnomamö use the bark of another kind of tree to make a trough and a crude canoe, both of which are nearly identical in shape, size, and method of construction. The tree is beaten with clubs to loosen the bark. The bark is then removed in one piece and hauled back to the village. The ends are heated in a fire to make them pliable and folded back to make the ends of the container. They are held firm by lashing two sticks together, pinching the folded bark into a flat-nosed basin. The interior bark surface becomes the exterior surface of the soup container. If the container is to be used as a canoe, a crude framework of sticks is added to the inside, giving 501 it more stability. The craft is so crude and heavy that the Yąnomamö generally do not use it for any purpose other than the trip for which it was intended, usually a downstream trip, since it would be almost impossible to move against a current in this rough craft. It is easier to walk than to try to pole the canoe upstream. The canoe, hence, is usually discarded after it makes its maiden voyage. Another will be made when it is needed.

415 574 264 The container is pinioned to the ground with stakes if it is to be used as a soup trough. Each time a feast is held, one or more of these bark containers is made in front of the headman's house, filled with the boiled ripe plantain soup, and frequented by the hungry guests, who dip out the soup with gourd spoons. The trough is thrown on the village rubbage heap after the feast is over.

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[172] [6]They find the stone axes when they make new gardens, explaining that the spirits left them behind for the Yąnomamö to use. This area was occupied in the distant past by tribes whose relationship to the present Yąnomamö is uncertain.

SHAMANS The nature of the relationship between man and spirit is largely one of hostility. The shamans, by and large, spend most of their time casting charms on enemies and enjoining their own personal demons to prevent harm from befalling the local people. Magic and curing are intimately bound up in shamanism, the practitioner devoting his efforts alternatively to causing and curing sickness.

The demons that the shamans contact are *hekura*, very tiny humanoid beings that dwell on rocks and mountains. Particularly successful shamans can control these demons to such an extent that the *hekura* will come and live inside the chest of the shaman. Each shaman solicits the aid of numerous *hekura* and attempts to lure them into his body.

Men who want to become shamans (*shabori*) go through a simple rite of fasting and chastity. They sit before their houses, use only a few trails, eat very little, and spend most of their time in a contemplative stupor brought about by hunger and drugs. After several days of this, the initiate has entered the world of the *shabori*, and can practice his skill. Each village has as many *shabori* as there are men who wish to enter this status: probably half of the men in each village are shamans.

Rerebawä told me that he was going to become a *shabori*, as he enjoyed taking the drugs and making contact with the spirit world. He decided to do this because his wife is still nursing their youngest child so that he cannot have sexual relationships with her anyway; the obligatory chastity associated with becoming a shaman will not be as difficult now as it would be when his wife weans the child. No *hekura* will dwell in the chest of a novice *shabori* who continues to have sexual relationships. After the practitioner has captured the *hekura* and they become acquainted with him, they will stay in his chest after he resumes his sexual activities.

Contact with the *hekura* is achieved by taking drugs. Particularly adept *shabori* can contact their *hekura* with only a pinch of drug, which they inhale directly from their fingers. Most of them, however, take a large dose of the drug by means of the hollow blowing tube. The *shabori* then prances back and forth in front of his house and chants to the demons he attempts to control, enjoining them to descend on enemies and cause them sickness (see Fig. 2-9). If he is curing someone, he chants before the house of the patient, rubs him, massages him, and draws the evil spirit causing the sickness to some extremity, such as an arm or leg. Then he sucks or pulls the spirit out and carries it away from the sick person, either vomiting it out or throwing it away, depending on how he extracted it originally. The Yąnomamö do not employ medicines made from plants or animals. Consequently, they rely exclusively on the cures that the *shabori* effect, fighting supernatural ills with supernatural medicine.

One of the surprises of my field experience was that I had to spend a great deal of time curing the sick, and my medicines were always in demand. The sick people, however, always took their illnesses to the *shabori* after I had treated them—one cannot be too careful.

CONCLUSION In summary, the Yąnomamö have effected an adaptation to their three environments. This is not to say that other means and techniques could not do the job equally well; but the peculiar combination of technology, social organization, and cosmology found among the Yąnomamö distinguishes them as a group from all other tribes. Although their technology is primitive, it permits them to exploit their jungle habitat sufficiently well to provide them with the wherewithal of physical comfort. The nature of their economy—slash-and-burn agriculture—coupled with the fact that they